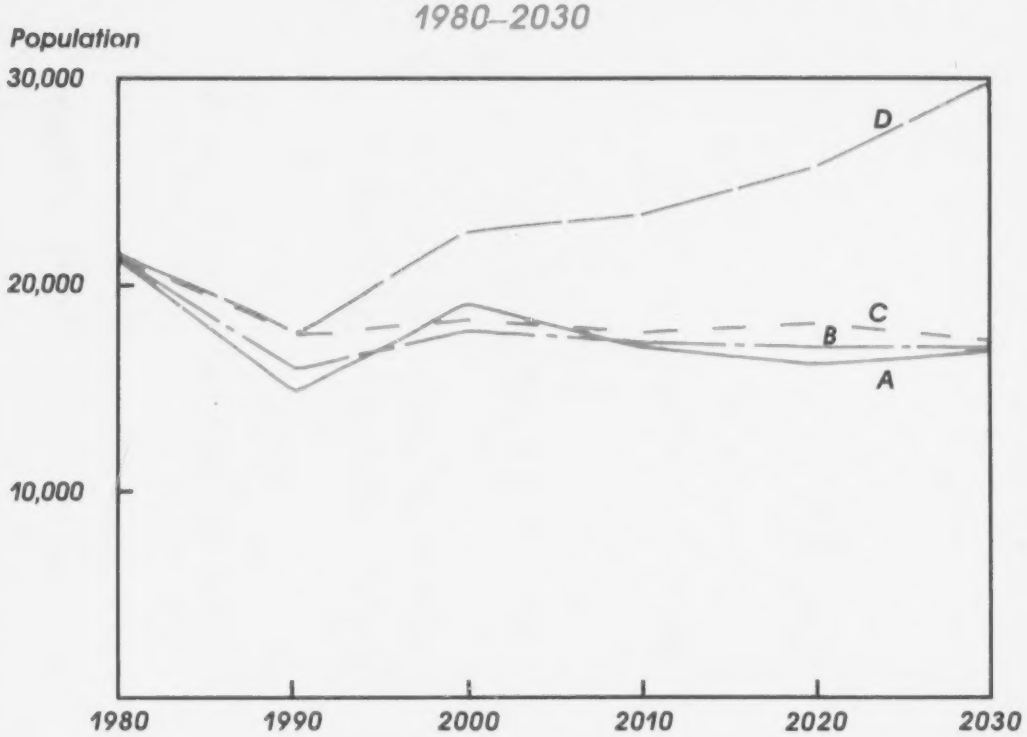
*Figure 3: School-Age Population (5–14) in Dominica, 1980–2030*




A: TFR of 3.4, net emigration of 800
B: TFR of 2.6, net emigration of 400
C: TFR of 2.1, net migration of zero
D: TFR of 3.4, net emigration of 400

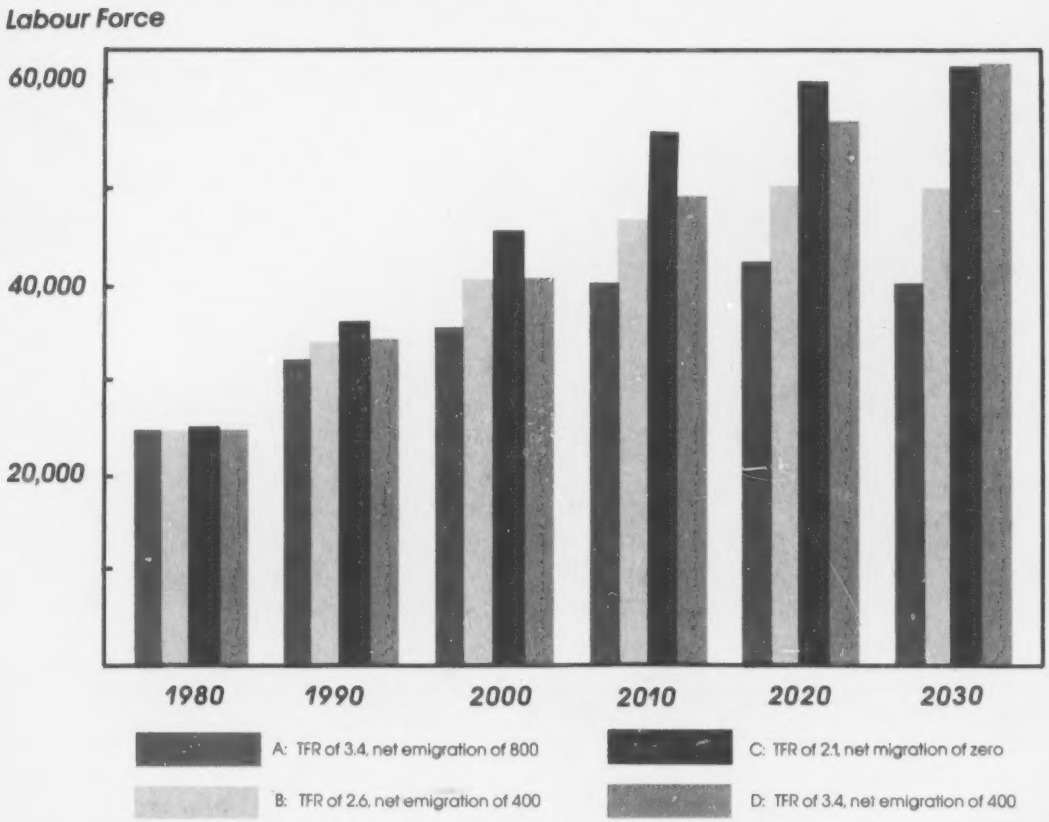
may fall but that does not necessarily mean that the number of youth will also decline. Similarly, while the percent elderly will rise, it does not indicate how many elderly persons there will be in the year 2030. A closer look at these various sectors of the population can give policymakers further guidance.

***School Enrollment:*** The population between the ages of 5 and 14 serves as a surrogate for school enrollment, as most children in that age-group attend school, together with some proportion of older children. In 1980, the school-age population totaled 21,163. Except under Scenario D, that number would not be reached again over the next 50 years. (See Figure 3; for supporting data, see Appendix Table C.) By the year 2000 school enrollments would vary between 18,000 and 19,000 and in 2030, between 17,000 and 18,000.

To be sure, this would occur only under the assumptions governing Scenarios A, B, and C. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that under both net emigration assumptions (800 net per year and 400) a not insignificant number of children are expected to leave the country, probably with their parents. This last assumption may be somewhat overstated. But even if the emigration of children is reduced, it seems reasonable to conclude that total school enrollments in Dominica should remain quite stable for the foreseeable future.

Such stability could allow for both qualitative improvements in the lower levels and increases in the enrollments among adolescents.

*Figure 4: Labour Force in Dominica, 1980–2030*

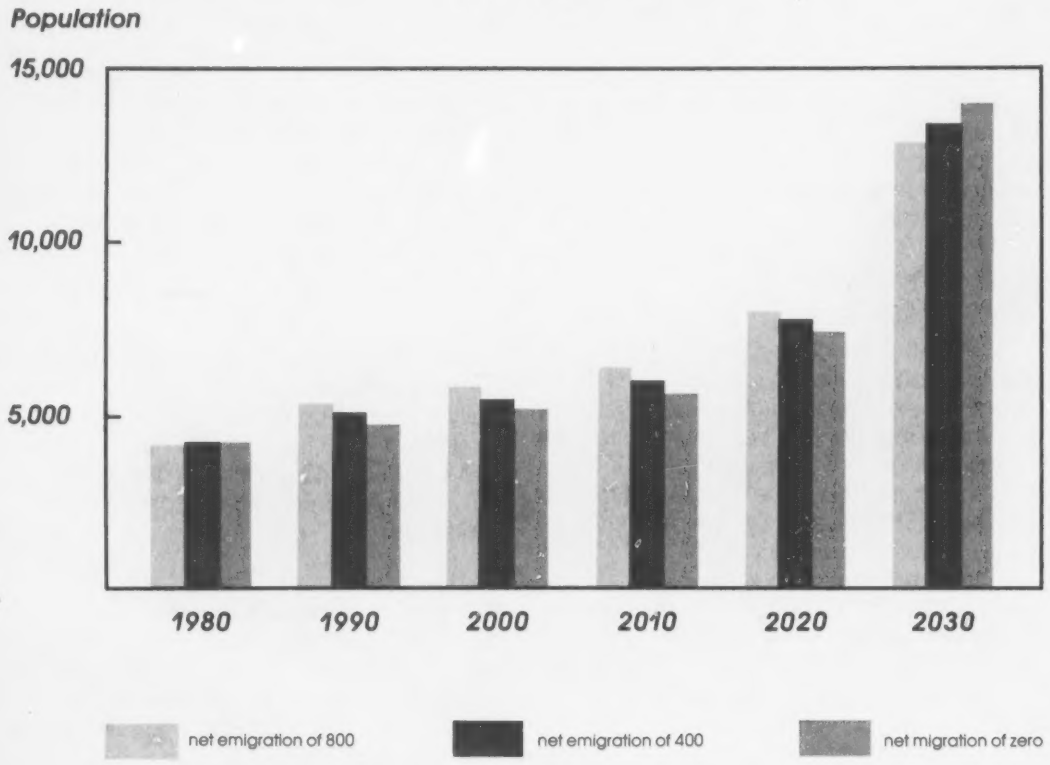



***Labour Force:*** As is true in all other East Caribbean nations, the short-term prospects for employment are far from encouraging. Based on labour force participation rates prepared by the International Labour Office for the Leeward Islands, the total number of people working or looking for work in Dominica amounted to 25,136 in 1980. Given an estimated unemployment rate of about 15 percent, this means that 3,770 people were out of work but nonetheless in the labour force.

Under all the scenarios put forth in this report, the number of Dominicans in the labour force will increase substantially over at least the next two decades. (See Figure 4; for supporting data, see Appendix Table D.) In 1990 that number would reach 32,903 under Scenario A and 34,694 under Scenario B, the two most likely future patterns of demographic behaviour. By the turn of the century another 3,500–6,000 would be added, resulting in a labour force of 36,447 under Scenario A and 41,157 under B. This is considerably larger than the 25,136 people in the labour force in 1980. If unemployment remains at its current level of about 15 percent, this means that in 1990 some 5,000 persons will be unable to locate jobs; by 2000 that number could grow to 6,000.

Only well into the twenty-first century would the labour force tend to level off (except under Scenario D) and employment conditions improve somewhat. Such improvements would reflect the lower fertility of the last two decades of the twentieth century. Similarly, the awesome projections for the immediate future reflect the higher fertility of earlier years.

*Figure 5: Elderly Population (65 or Older) in Dominica, 1980–2030*




Despite continued emigration the number of persons entering the labour force will continue to grow for some time to come simply because the number of births was greater in the 1960s than in the 1970s and 1980s. Thus it is important to bear in mind that for the next 20 years these labour force projections are quite reliable. The people who will be looking for jobs in 1990 and 1995 are already born; only changes in migration can significantly affect how many job-seekers there will be in those years.

***The Elderly:*** Most developing nations are so concerned with either excessive population growth or with problems associated with youth or the economy that little attention is given to the problems associated with a growing elderly population. Yet in many such countries, the cohorts born before 1960 (whose fertility was high and whose death rates were falling) are large and, despite some reductions through mortality and emigration, will remain large when they become elderly sometime after 2020. This is as true in Dominica as it is in all the other East Caribbean nations.

Furthermore, in Dominica and elsewhere the situation is aggravated by the fact that while net emigration is assumed to continue, this does not mean that the elderly are leaving. Indeed, the opposite is true. The elderly (and near-elderly) tend to return to their homeland after having been away, sometimes for many decades. Thus, the higher net emigration was and is now, the larger the potential number of middle-age and elderly returnees.

In 1980 there were an estimated 4,200 persons 65 or older. Under three of the postulated demographic patterns, that number will increase by some 20 to 25 percent by 1990, when there will be over 5,000 elderly Dominicans. (See Figure 5; for supporting data, see Appendix Table E.) Scenario C is an exception as no migration is assumed. The number of elderly will continue to rise for the foreseeable future, to between 5,500 and 5,900 in 2000, and in 2030 Dominica's population will include some 13,000 elderly, three times as many as presently in the population.

As mentioned earlier, the proportion of the total population 65 or older will grow over the next 50 years from 6 to 13 percent. It is the translation of these rates into real numbers that is most meaningful for decision-making in the development of policy, however. The needs of the elderly are vastly different from those of the young. Health care can be quite expensive; dependency problems grow. Although the issue will not face Dominica for another 30–40 years, it may be appropriate to begin preparing now, for this situation will undoubtedly occur—the elderly of 2020 and 2030 are already born.

***Conclusion:*** Dominica is in a favourable position demographically speaking as it faces the twenty-first century. However, this healthy status is tentative at best. Only if fertility does not rise and only if net emigration remains at its current high level can the nation be assured of a slow rate of growth, culminating in a zero-growth situation early in the next century. Any decrease in net emigration would have to be offset by substantial declines in fertility if the same end result of no growth is to be achieved.

Aside from sheer size, the nation's policymakers have to face a demographically founded problem soon in the large number of additions to the labour force. And within 30–40 years the size of the elderly population could become a significant issue.

In sum, every aspect of the Dominican population—its size as well as its composition; its fertility, mortality, and migration—must be continuously closely monitored and must be considered in governmental policymaking.

# Appendices

## *Table A: Population and Crude Birth and Death Rates in Dominica, 1946–70*

| Year | Population | Crude Birth Rate | Crude Death Rate | Rate of Natural Increase |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (number) | (per 1,0000 population) | | (percent) |
| 1946 | 47,630 | 36.2 | 20.9 | 1.5 |
| 1950 | 51,850* | 35.9 | 18.4 | 1.8 |
| 1955 | 57,410* | 44.8 | 15.3 | 3.0 |
| 1960 | 59,920 | 46.9 | 14.9 | 3.2 |
| 1970 | 69,549 | 39.0 | 10.0 | 2.9 |

*End of Year Estimates

## *Table B: Current and Projected Population of Dominica, 1980–2030*

| Scenario | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 | 2020 | 2030 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 72,311 | 78,899 | 86,387 | 91,165 | 94,485 | 96,767 |
| B | 72,311 | 82,521 | 91,710 | 100,129 | 104,792 | 110,980 |
| C | 72,311 | 86,682 | 98,431 | 110,794 | 121,242 | 128,789 |
| D | 72,311 | 83,880 | 98,937 | 114,032 | 131,143 | 149,622 |

A: TFR of 3.4, net emigration of 800
B: TFR of 2.6, net emigration of 400
C: TFR of 2.1, net migration of zero
D: TFR of 3.4, net migration of 400

## *Table C: Current and Projected School-Age Population (5–14) in Dominica, 1980–2030*

| Scenario | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 | 2020 | 2030 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 21,163 | 14,882 | 19,005 | 17,407 | 16,437 | 16,956 |
| B | 21,163 | 16,276 | 18,234 | 17,580 | 17,116 | 16,981 |
| C | 21,163 | 17,665 | 18,532 | 18,177 | 18,401 | 18,077 |
| D | 21,163 | 16,276 | 22,506 | 23,562 | 25,482 | 29,597 |

## *Table D: Current and Projected Labour Force in Dominica, 1980–2030*

| Scenario | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 | 2020 | 2030 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 25,136 | 32,903 | 36,447 | 40,455 | 43,394 | 40,657 |
| B | 25,136 | 34,694 | 41,157 | 47,360 | 50,551 | 50,200 |
| C | 25,136 | 36,485 | 45,872 | 54,889 | 59,745 | 61,137 |
| D | 25,136 | 34,696 | 41,169 | 49,251 | 56,857 | 62,054 |

## *Table E: Current and Projected Elderly Population (65 or Older) in Dominica, 1980–2030*

| Scenario | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 | 2020 | 2030 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 4,253 | 5,291 | 5,891 | 6,461 | 8,184 | 12,920 |
| B and D | 4,253 | 5,082 | 5,500 | 6,020 | 7,935 | 13,475 |
| C | 4,253 | 4,873 | 5,108 | 5,577 | 7,689 | 14,028 |

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